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Envoy to Peking Is Eager to Sell Arms Expertise

Arthur Hummel Jr., the U.S. ambassador in Peking, played a major role in the secret campaign to let American firms sell China high-technology equipment having military usefulness.

Hummel was born in China to American missionary parents and fought alongside the Chinese in World War II. Now, in his dispatches to Washington, he portrays the Chinese communist regime as an irreplaceable friend, to be cultivated at all cost.

One highly sensitive cable from Hummel was among more than 20 secret CIA and White House documents shown to my associate Dale Van Atta. A few of them were even classified with such exotic extra code words as "Homer."

Referring to the sale of high-tech items to China, Hummel complained that the existing restrictions were too stringent, and claimed that Peking could circumvent them by purchasing technology for high-priority projects from other countries.

Therefore, rather than cause con-

tracts to go to U.S. competitors, the restrictions should be relaxed or eliminated, Hummel argued.

Hummel urged that China be put in the same category for high-tech exports as India—a suggestion that ignores the fact that India is a noncommunist democracy historically friendly to the United States.

The ambassador strongly advocated the removal of nearly all national security controls on exports to China.

He acknowledged that there is some risk in this, but that's putting it mildly.

The fact is that, with the kind of computers the Chinese can obtain under relaxed export controls, Peking could aim its nuclear missiles at U.S. targets instead of those inside the Soviet Union.

Assuming eternal Sino-American friendship overlooks the dangerous possibility of eventual rapprochement between the two communist superpowers.

In fact, according to one top-secret intelligence estimate, the Chinese have already developed CSS4 intercontinental missiles with "an expanded nuclear targeting capability, to include the continental United States."

They will have 15 of these deployed by the end of the 1980s, the estimate states.

The expertise of sophisticated American computers would make it easier for Peking to lob such nuclear warheads accurately on American targets.

None of this even takes into consideration the dozens of nuclear missiles China already has that can rain destruction on our Pacific allies. Perhaps for this reason U.S. officials have not consulted with our allies over lifting the export restrictions, according to my sources.

Even an improvement in Chinese conventional military strength poses a threat to our Pacific friends, the Pentagon warns in a report that includes a geography lesson on China's proximity to our allies: 100 kilometers to Taiwan, 450 kilometers to Japan, 400 kilometers to the Philippines, and so forth.

But Hummel, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige and presidential science adviser George A. Keyworth have succeeded in having China placed in the status of a "friendly non-allied" country.

An inter-agency task force is now deciding exactly what high-tech products the Chinese will be able to buy.

When the group's work is done, early this month, its guidelines will be placed in the Federal Register for public comment, as required by law. No press releases are planned.